REGIONAL RESOURCES PROJECT #1

ASSESSMENT REPORT

101-07492/

Robert C. Scace
PRIVATE CONSULTANT

~~Cabinet Office~~

KUOC
Resources, Regional -
Alberta

June 14th, 1973.

Honourable David J. Russell,
Minister of Municipal Affairs,
Room 222 Legislative Building,
EDMONTON, Alberta.

Dear Mr. Russell:

I have the pleasure of transmitting to you the attached report which constitutes an independent assessment of Regional Resources Project #1.

The Project was initiated on a one-year experimental basis in September, 1972, and has been financed by the Government of Alberta and by the eleven communities participating in the endeavor.

This assessment is based primarily upon personal interviews, a perusal of the Project's files and an examination of appropriate documents. The Project is discussed in general rather than in specific terms. However, specific examples of the relative merits of the Project cited by many individuals have been borne in mind in the preparation of the report.

A number of recommendations have been made. One recommendation suggests that the Government of Alberta give consideration to supporting the Project for at least one more year. Strong support for such an extension has already come from most of the participating communities and is documented in the report.

I trust that this report will represent a fair review of the progress of Regional Resources Project #1 to date and will be of assistance to those concerned with its future directions.

Yours sincerely,

Robert C Scace.

Robert C. Scace Ph.D.
Professional Geographer

RCS:mcm
Attach.

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Robert C. Scace
PRIVATE CONSULTANT

June 14th, 1973.

Mr. Wayne Ohlhauser,
Chairman of the Board,
Regional Resources Project #1,
CARBON, Alberta.

Dear Mr. Ohlhauser:

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by

Robert C. Scace Ph.D.

Calgary, Alberta. June, 1973

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

On May 8, 1973 the author was retained by Mr. Hugh Bodmer, Project Coordinator of Regional Resources Project No. 1 to prepare an independent assessment of the Project. In discussions with Mr. Bodmer and with Mr. Frank Marlyn, Director, The Task Force on Urbanization and The Future, verbal terms of reference for the assessment were established as follows. The author was:-

- -to become informed of the aims and to enquire into the activities of the Project during the approximately nine months of its existance;

- -to pursue such enquiries by means of interviews and correspondence with individuals from communities participating in the Project, with representatives of public agencies who were familiar with and in some instances contributing to Project activities, with the Project Coordinator, and with other persons whose comments on the Project's aims and activities would prove constructive;

- -to assess the extent to which individual programs and the Project as a whole were fulfilling the original expectations of the participating communities;

- -to determine what local support existed for the continuation of the Project beyond its experimental first year and to recommend whether such an extension was desirable;

- -to enquire of representatives of public agencies whether an undertaking of the nature of this Project represented a meaningful and positive step towards developing the potential of smaller communities, recognizing the existing programs and services provided by government agencies;

- -to assess the strategies and practical implications of the Project and to ascertain what were its relative advantages and its shortcomings;

- -to suggest what changes might be contemplated if the Project is to be extended beyond its initial year; and

-to comment upon the prospects of initiating similar projects elsewhere in Alberta.

In exercising these Terms of Reference much assistance was rendered by Mr. Bodmer, by representatives of the communities, by many people in public service and by other qualified individuals. Without their participation much of the objectivity sought after in this report might have been lost.

HISTORY OF PROJECT

The following account describes the circumstances which led to the formation of Regional Resources Project #1 and summarizes the principal aims of the Project.

The Task Force on Urbanization and The Future was established by the Government of Alberta in 1971 to examine aspects of urbanization which were of concern to the people of the province. Six task committees were formed. The committees were based in different areas of the province and each was charged with investigating a particular problem. The issue examined in the Drumheller Region was that of rural decline, the committee assuming the title of the Task Committee on the Potential of Smaller Cities, Towns and Communities in Regions of Slow Growth. For the purposes of its investigations, the committee defined the "Drumheller Region" as an area lying within an approximate 50 mile radius of Drumheller and including the communities of Acme, Trochu, Three Hills, Carbon, Rockyford, Standard, Hussar, Bassano, East Coulee, Wayne, Rosedale, Drumheller, Delia, Morrin, Hanna and portions of the Municipal Districts of Starland and Kneehill, County of Wheatland and Improvement District No. 7.

The work of this committee was completed in June 1972 and a report published shortly thereafter.[1] The committee expressed concern about "the decreasing number of life-style options available to Albertans," and commented that "one of the consequences of rural decline has been that many rural people, largely through no fault of their own, find themselves in difficult economic circumstances." The report continued that:

> this Committee does not concur with the concept of natural, inevitable decline but sees it rather as the product of multiple though uncoordinated decision-making processes wherein those involved in decision-making have failed to preceive all the ramifications inherent in their decisions. In view of this, the same decision-making, whether government or in industry, must be encouraged to restore and promote some balance in the distribution of the province's economic growth.

The report contained several recommendations which the committee thought would help to eliminate some of the disadvantages associated with rural life. One recommendation

stated that:

> The Provincial Government must be prepared to assist in underwriting a professional community development person, who has the community's best interests at heart, on a continuing basis and in residence in each region.

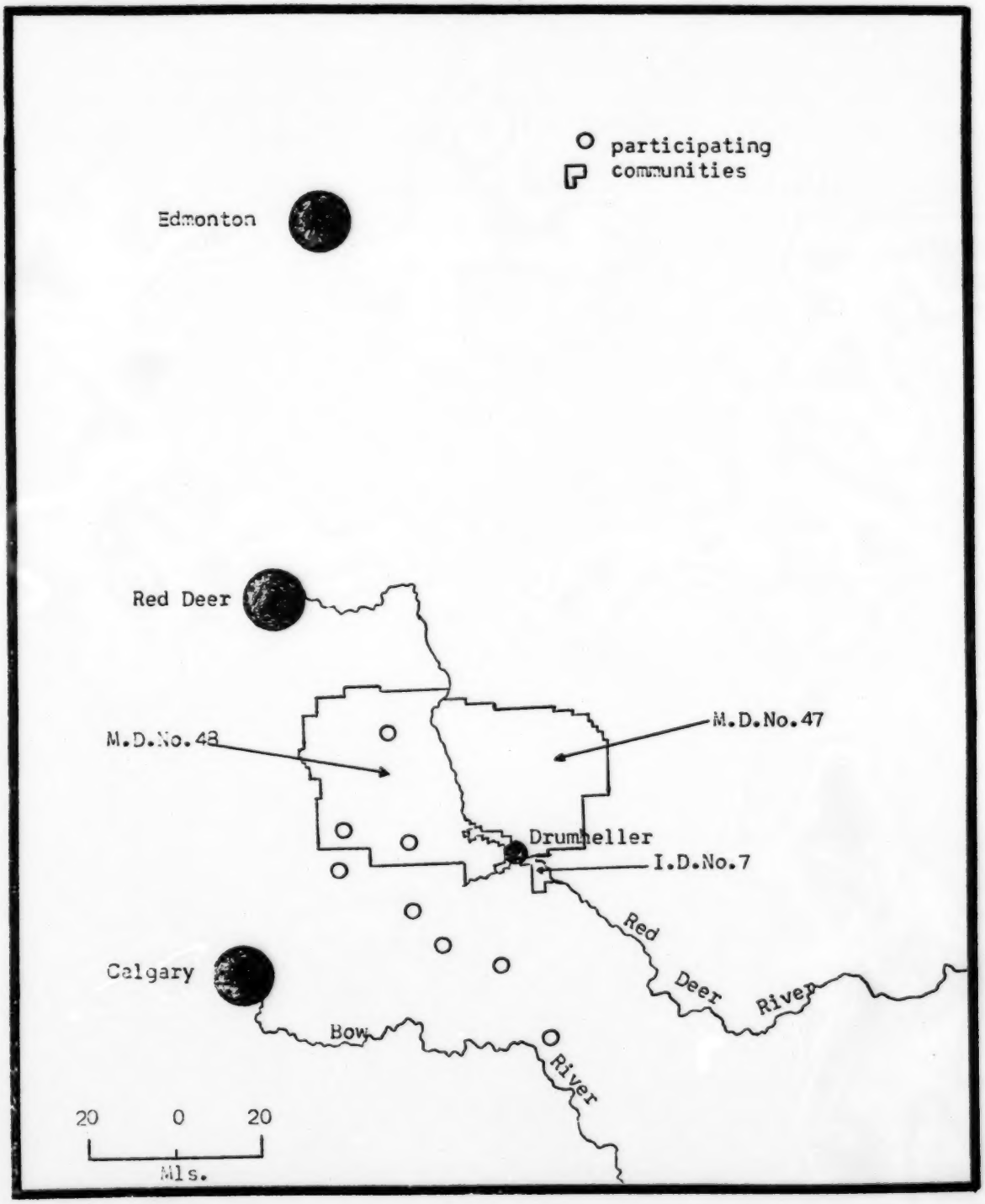
As the Task Committee completed its work Mr. Hugh Bodmer, who had been its coordinator since September, 1971, determined that efforts be made to implement this and other recommendations prepared by the committee. He obtained the support and financial backing of eleven communities in the Drumheller Region and submitted a proposal for a Regional Resources Project to the Premier of Alberta. The Project was intended to fill gaps "in the area of community development processes" and aimed to provide:

- professional assistance and expertise in co-ordinating government services at the local level;
- information dissemination;
- community inventories;
- initiative in establishing of local development companies; and
- integrated planning

The Government of Alberta approved the Project on a one-year experimental basis and the Task Force contributed $19,040 to the $300 provided by each of the participating communities--Trochu, Acme, Standard, Carbon, Rockyford, Beiseker, Hussar, Bassano, M.D. of Starland (No. 47), M.D. of Kneehill (No. 48), and I.D. No. 7 (see maps and Table 1).

Work on the Project began on September 1, 1972 and Mr. Bodmer as Project Coordinator was to carry out the terms of the proposal under the general guidance of a local committee representative of the participating communities. The office of the Project has been located centrally in Carbon and Mr. Bodmer travels regularly to each of the participating communities.

LOCATION OF REGIONAL RESOURCES PROJECT #1



SKETCH MAP OF REGIONAL RESOURCES PROJECT #1

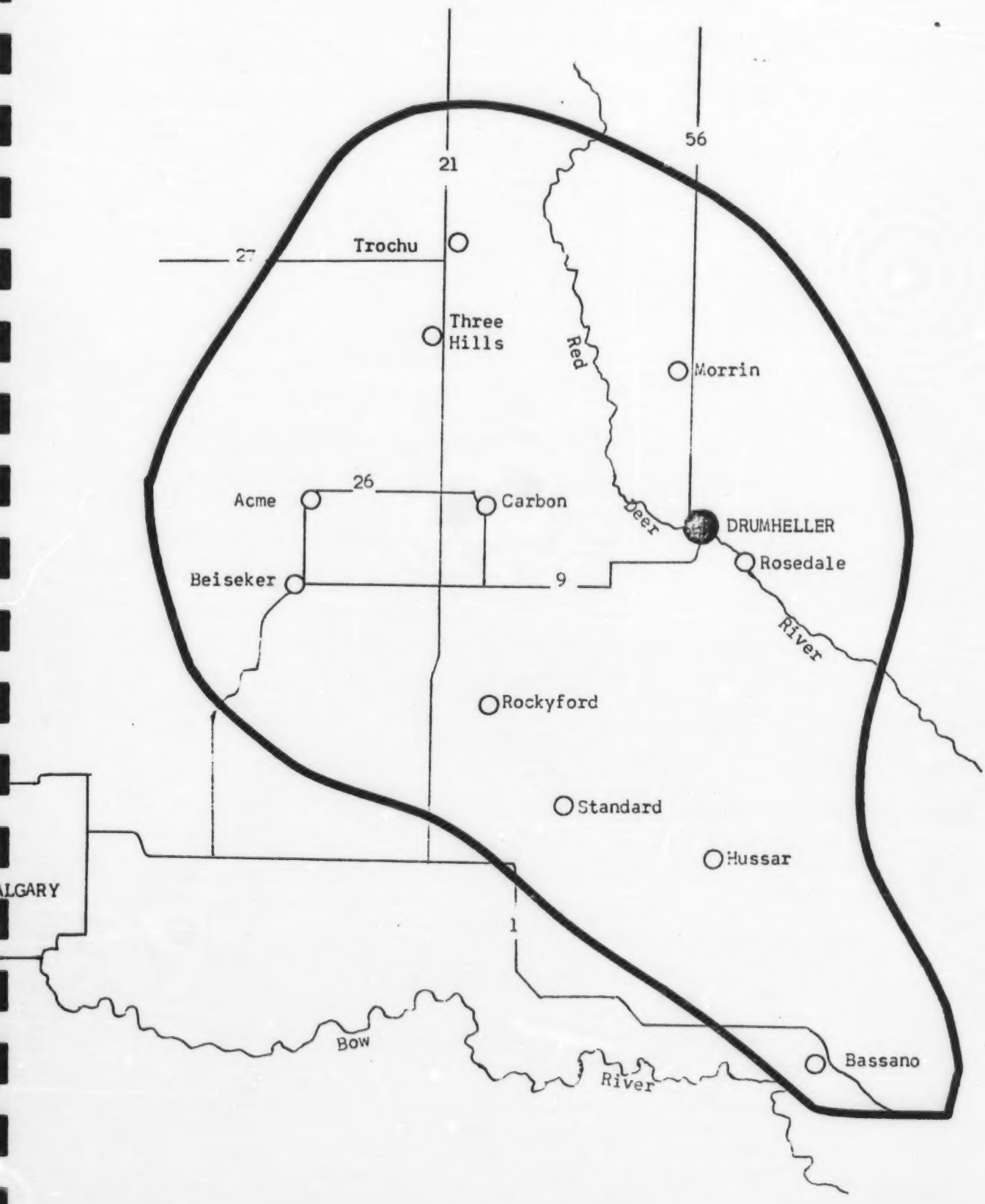


TABLE 1

POPULATION OF MUNICIPALITIES IN

"POTENTIAL OF SMALLER TOWNS AND CITIES"

STUDY AREA

	1961	1971	Increase or Decrease
Acme	328	320	- 8
Bassano	815	855	+ 40
Carbon	371	367	- 4
Craigmyle	107	65	- 42
Delia	287	286	- 1
Drumheller	2931	5240	+ 2309
Hanna	2645	2539	- 106
Hussar	213	167	- 46
Morrin	316	272	- 44
Munson	82	52	- 30
Nacmine			
Rockyford	288	285	- 3
Rosedale			
Rowley			
Rumsey	123	113	- 10
Standard	266	263	- 3
Three Hills	1491	1452	- 39
Trochu	671	731	+ 60
M.D. 47	2907	2535	- 372
M.D. 48	7008	6290	- 718
County 16	5570	5062	- 508
Special Area 2	3805	?	?

METHOD OF ENQUIRY

To familiarize himself with the aims and activities of Regional Resources Project #1 the author held several discussions with the Project Coordinator and examined files and reports in the latter's office in Carbon. Information was obtained during meetings of the Project's Board of Directors and Local Development Companies Boards of Directors. Each participating community was visited, the meetings being advertized well in advance. Responses were elicited from representatives in all eleven communities.

Persons representing a number of public agencies were contacted in Calgary and Edmonton, responses coming in the form of interviews, telephone discussions and letters. The agencies included the Alberta Department of Agriculture, Department of the Environment, Department of Industry and Commerce, Alberta Housing Corporation, Department of Municipal Affairs, Calgary Regional Planning Commission and others.

Enquiries were made of professional people familiar with the Project. The Project Coordinator was requested to submit a confidential report. Some individuals in participating communities prepared personal statements. And finally, each community was invited to indicate its support, financial and otherwise, for the Project to be continued beyond its first year. Documents submitted by the communities are appended to the report.

REVIEW OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

As noted above five principal aims were enunciated for the Project in its first year. Activities associated with these five objectives are hereafter reviewed. Some of the opinions expressed about each of the activities are noted. An assessment completes each section.

1) Professional Assistance and Expertise in Coordinating Services at the Local Level.

Originally the Task Committee recommended that the provincial government with its many programs must make a deliberate attempt to promote its services. Presumably this recommendation could be extended to include the federal government wherever its programs have been designed to assist individuals, businesses and communities in the provinces.

In the Project proposal the Project Coordinator "would be in a good position to act as the liaison between senior government services and the people." The proposal noted that frequently government services and programs are presented in such a way as to discourage the potential user. The proposal further stated that the coordinator would interpret programs in terms that could be understood by potential users. If successfully applied the "present gap between the programs and the users would be appreciably narrowed and added support would be given to the (Provincial) Government's present emphasis on rural development." [2]

activities There are many tangible results to show for the application of professional assistance. The following are amongst the accomplishments:-

(a) seven Opportunity for Youth applications supported by the Project, six of which were approved. The grants have brought $32,195.00 to the communities of Acme, Rosedale, Morrin, Beiseker, Trochu and Carbon. Time limitations seemingly precluded additional applications being submitted. All applications submitted resulted from the initiatives of the Project Coordinator.

(b) two Local Initiatives Program applications instigated by the coordinator were approved for Morrin and Bassano for a total of $23,500.

(c) at least eight people were employed in three communities through the federal Training on the Job program. Again, information on the program was supplied by the coordinator.

(d) the Alberta Housing Corporation was requested to prepare a housing survey in each of the participating communities. This it did. The Corporation also prepared an economic analysis of the region.

(e) the Water Resources Division of the Department of the Environment is preparing a water resources and surface drainage study for the communities, the importance of this study being the fact that most of the communities are dependent upon wells for their water supply. Also, cognizant of the tourist potential of their region, the communities are anxious to have an assessment of the potential for water-based outdoor recreational activities.

(f) several Local Development Cooperatives have been formed--eight at this point in time. Intensive assistance has been provided by the coordinator in this respect and the LDC's are more fully reported on in (4) below.

(g) a number of individuals, sufficiently concerned about housing conditions in their communities to contemplate departure for larger centres, have remained because of home-building loans provided by government agencies. In almost every instance information about these loans came from the Project Coordinator or others involved in the Project.

(h) information on the Summer Temporary Employment Program supplied through the Project has resulted in applications being made by individual communities. At this time notification has been received of some of these applications being approved.

The Project Coordinator has made regular appearances in each of the participating communities on a monthly basis. On these occasions he has been in a position to advise individuals of various programs and services available to them. Should the information not be at hand the coordinator has either sent for the desired material himself or advised the interested party of which agency to contact. The coordinator is also available by phone in his Carbon office where he maintains

file materials, reports and directories relevant to federal and provincial government programs.

Beyond the practical results of such professional assistance, as illustrated in the above examples, many other benefits can be brought to the communities. There is the potential for greater local interest and knowledge generally in government programs. As a corollary there is the prospect of greater government interest in a region and its communities from which there emanate requests for information and assistance. This is particularly so where the staff from public agencies are requested to visit the communities to observe and discuss problems on the site. During the months of the Project's endeavours staff from several agencies have been to communities in the Project area and have participated in some of the programs set up by the Project.

What then have been the general reactions to this aspect of the Project's work?

opinions expressed With but few exceptions response to the role and activities of the Project Coordinator have been very favorable. Many people recognize that grants and other assistance brought to their respective communities relate directly to the initial groundwork prepared by the coordinator. Such reservations as have been expressed relate primarily to the limited time the coordinator can spend in each community. Mr. Peter Vang, Regional Cooperative Officer of the Department of Agriculture notes "the project should be on a smaller scale than it presently is. The area and the number of communities involved cannot be adequately handled by one man. He is unable to spend enough time to be able to properly assist each of the communities involved." Commenting on the same problem one community representative added that the coordinator "served only as a resource person, providing information and guidance on various programs and projects." One village council commented that it "has been unable to see any great benefits in the project, however, given time, it may prove of some value."

More typical of the many general comments received is that in the letter from Trochu (see Appendix). "Through this project we became much more aware of the government assistance available, we know where to ask for it and also know how to apply for it." An Acme representative wrote, "the general public has been given more opportunity to know of the possible government programs that they could use if they so wish.... Village councils...have been able to take advantage of such programs as OFY, LIP, STEP. These programs have given the

the village councils much more confidence for the future...." In Carbon the succinct comment was heard, "Since the Project began we've had more government people in here looking at things and helping us than we've had in the past five years."

This general community approbation for professional assistance provided through the Project has been echoed amongst representatives of public agencies. Henry Larkin, Field Representative for the Alberta Opportunity Company wrote:

> In my opinion, the people of Alberta, and, particularly those in the smaller communities, are not aware of the many fine services available to them through the Government of Alberta. If the Regional Resources Project is making people aware, as indeed it is as far as this Company is concerned, then I would suggest that Project #1 is justifying its existence.

A Calgary Regional Planning Commission representative has noted that the Project "provides highly improved channels of communication between residents of small urban centres in rural areas and the provincial administration," as well as informing of public services available. An Industrial Development Branch spokesman offered that the Project's information role helped to offset the "economic predestination" imposed upon small centres by various public agencies.

assessment The provision of successful professional assistance depends upon four factors:

(a) an informed and active Project Coordinator;

(b) public agencies prepared to provide the Project communities with qualified staff and with relevant information;

(c) the existence of programs and services relevant to the needs of the participating communities; and

(d) individuals, businesses and councils prepared to make use of programs and services being offered.

(a) It is the opinion of the writer that the progress of the Project owes much to the solid work of the Project Coordinator, Mr. Hugh Bodmer. His value to the communities is reflected in the opinion of many individuals that "if there were no Hugh Bodmer the Project would be allowed to run down."

Since first inviting the several communities to support his proposal, Mr. Bodmer has endeavored to make the aims of the Project a reality. He has carried a variety of information to the communities and has spent many hours simply talking to people, explaining the nature and scope of programs and services. This is an onerous but necessary task.

Such an exercise is difficult to evaluate but the tangible results of his work, noted above, demonstrate that the small towns and villages are beginning to benefit from his activities. Indeed, his work as a professional advisor and representative of the communities may be his most important function. For, despite the initiative of the communities in supporting the Project, Mr. Bodmer must constantly encourage individuals to press ahead with their enquiries and applications to public agencies and in other ways. The important point, however, is that these communities had no one to so stimulate them in the past.

Other factors have contributed to make Mr. Bodmer's efforts acceptable to those rural communities.

First, representatives from the communities had participated in the work of the Task Committee and thus appreciated the need for a Regional Resources Project. The Project could expect to receive the moral and financial support that might be less readily provided in a region bereft of the activities associated with the Task Committee.

Secondly, Mr. Bodmer is a native of the area and thus is sensitive to the needs, perceptions and attitudes of its residents. As a corollary, (although this point was not stressed by those interviewed), Mr. Bodmer may be more acceptable to the communities than a person with a recognized urban background.

Thirdly, Mr. Bodmer has established his office in the Project area rather than commute from a larger centre--as many civil servants are obliged to do. Therefore he is accessible to the people he works with. In turn he is able to travel to the communities particularly for the many evening meetings which are so much a component of rural life. The accessibility of the Project coordinator was noted with appreciation by many people interviewed.

Fourthly, the Project Coordinator must appreciate that he has to liaise between the participating communities and public agencies. This requires that while he inform, stimulate and assist individuals in communities, the coordinator must refrain

from assuming overall responsibility for submissions, requests, applications, etc. prepared by individuals or by councils. Further, he must refrain from assuming postures which are properly the responsibility of the agencies. To date this fine balance seems to have been maintained. Writing of the relationship between Mr. Bodmer and the Alberta Opportunity Company, Mr. Larkin notes:

> Mr. Bodmer has referred many people to this office and I find that he has been doing an excellent job of explaining the aims of A.O.C. without going into the qualifying factors and other requirements, which, when wrongly explained only makes our job tougher in dealing with potential users of the program.

Fifthly, Mr. Bodmer is self-employed, fulfilling his co-ordinator role on a contractural arrangement with the Government of Alberta. He is not a civil servant. This arrangement is considered to be extremely important from several standpoints. The coordinator is seen by the communities to be employed by <u>them</u> to represent their specific interests rather than as a civil servant performing a public service. Also, the arrangement provides the coordinator with much more freedom in approaching line departments. He is not bound by the policies, regulations and other constraints which any institution inevitably imposes upon its staff.

(b) The response of public agencies to requests for assistance from Project communities appears to have been somewhat mixed. Nearly all public officers contacted believed the aims of the Project to be sound, but most indicated that more time must pass before the value and impact of the Project can be adequately assessed. In one or two instances persons interviewed readily conceded that the need for the Project and the work it has accomplished to date point to shortcomings in the transmittal of government programs and services to the public.

Some public officers have been critical, in a general way, of poor public response to some of their own initiatives, citing poor attendance at information meetings as indicative of this lethargy. Herein lies an important point. Community initiatives for local improvements must be worked at and guided. It is one thing for a community to express its desire for improvements in local conditions (and to emphasize this willingness by contributing funds as each of the eleven participating communities have done). It is a much more complicated endeavour to direct these initiatives in a way that is constructive in the long term. Efforts must be made on a continuing basis by both communities and representatives of public agencies.

It is to strengthen this relationship that the Project in large measure exists. Thus public agencies must be prepared to demonstrate a patience and continuity of interest in specific areas and communities. For example, such a continuing interest has seemingly been demonstrated by Mr. Ray Huene of the Industrial Development Branch and others who have worked in specific aspects of the Project.

(c) The intent here is not to evaluate the merits of government programs but rather to suggest that there is assistance at both the federal and provincial levels for the needs, industrial, commercial and residential, of smaller communities. Some of these programs have been taken advantage of by businesses, councils and individuals in the Project area.

That many of these programs have not been taken advantage of before may be attributable to two factors. First there seems to have been a failure amongst federal and provincial agencies to communicate their services adequately. Secondly, there has been a reluctance amongst smaller communities in the past to go seeking grants, loans and other forms of support.

Importantly, the activities of the Project members may represent a very real test of the programs offered to them. Already some shortcomings in one agency's operations have been brought to light. This illustrates the occasional difficulties of actually effecting government programs of assistance.

The Project region might be examined even more closely by the federal and provincial governments with a view to determining just how readily some of their programs and services can be applied.

(d) We cannot pretend that in each of the participating communities there is universal groundswell of support for the Project generally, and interest in the professional assistance rendered by the Project Coordinator in particular. Indeed, despite the not inconsiderable publicity generated on behalf of the Project many are seemingly ignorant of its aims, even of its existence.

In each community there appears to be a nucleus of concerned individuals who have recognized that new strategies must be devised to stabilize local populations and to provide reasonable opportunities for jobs, good housing and adequate utility services. Many of the individuals already sit on local councils and are very active on behalf of their communities in other respects. The extent to which they have communicated the

benefits available through the Project cannot be readily evaluated, but in some instances individuals have admitted to being lax in this respect.

Several people contacted commented upon the indifference of their fellows. One village representative noted, "a weakness in the Project is the lack of interest by a large segment of the public which seems very apathetic towards any new programs, unless they are directly benefitted. How to reach them is still a serious problem, and how to get others to help themselves is a big question mark." The letter from Mr. W. D. Taylor of Hussar is also instructive in this respect (see Appendix).

In fairness we must note that in some instances, Carbon for example, there has been good response to the services offered through the Project and many individuals have benefitted from a variety of programs. Local Development Cooperatives (discussed below) have the potential to involve many more people in the communities in which they are formed.

It is well to recall here that the Project is but a few months old and more people can be expected to benefit from its operations in the months ahead.

2) Information Dissemination

In his proposal the coordinator stated that he would compile a set of information literature on relevant government programs. This literature would then be placed at strategic locations in the participating communities, to be taken by interested parties or to be used during the coordinator's visits.

activities. The information displays have been set up with a variety of federal and provincial government and private institutional material displayed. Most of the displays are in village offices.

opinions expressed. Very few opinions were expressed on the displays. The reason may best be found in the Project Coordinator's words that "people just do not seem to be using the service to the extent I had expected."

assessment. Greater benefits are thought to lie in the presence of the coordinator in each of the communities to discuss at first hand the various programs with local citizens. Nevertheless, the existing displays should be maintained even though they may directly benefit only a few people.

3) Community Inventories

A third objective set out in the proposal concerned the preparation of community inventories. The proposal stated:

> The inventories would be compiled on an individual community basis and then integrated into a regional package. Consequently, the necessary correlations with prospective industries could be provided on a community-within-a-region basis.

The inventories were completed as part of the Business Development Course.

activities. The Business Development Course or community development course drew 22 participants, two from each community. The course was presented with the assistance of representatives from the provincial Industrial Development Branch.

The case method example was used and participants required to investigate various problems facing smaller centres. The intent was that through the "case approach" individuals would begin to recognize the many common problems which faced all smaller centres, theirs included.

The participants prepared inventories of their respective communities, seeking to establish what facilities and natural resources each centre possessed or lacked. It was intended that the information be assembled into a usable packaged document to attract businesses, residents, etc. to the region. To date this has not been done.

Many of the course participants spearheaded the establishment of Local Development Companies in their respective communities and now serve in an executive capacity in those companies.

opinions expressed. There were several expressions of support for the course. Those who had attended commented that the course helped to clarify the basic problems facing small centres. The Project Coordinator believes that the inventory may be of value to those involved in establishing Local Development Companies. However, the Calgary Regional Planning Commission sees the inventories as having little direct value to the regional-municipal planning function of the Commission. (The Commission very recently set up a standard procedure for the completion of the Community Information System).

assessment. The Business Development Course and the inventories completed as part of it seem to have been of some value to the participants. The scope of this part of the Project goes beyond that originally proposed.

There may be rewards in offering the course again using updated inventory forms and a casebook more applicable to existing conditions in rural Alberta.

For many residents of small communities a course of this nature offered through the Project may be the only opportunity they will have of placing their own problems in perspective.

Finally, it should be noted that the inventories have already been used to supply information to a government agency undertaking a survey in this region.

4) Local Development Companies

A main thrust of the Project proposal was that Local Development Companies would be set up in the communities. The nature and purpose of the LDC has been described by the Alberta Department of Industry and Commerce:-

> A local development company is a corporate entity composed of civic-minded persons who are interested in solving the economic and industrial problems of their community--it has the chief advantage of being the focal point for human and financial growth and development.

activities. To date eight Local Development Companies have been established with share prices ranging from $10 to $50. A ninth LDC will be formed shortly. Considerable time has been spent in creating the LDC's, initial work towards their formation getting under way four months ago. There have been many meetings between the communities and the Project Coordinator. For example, the latter attended 19 meetings in April.

The LDC's appear to be in various stages of evolution at this time, the most advanced being Carbon which has an application in with the Alberta Housing Corporation to develop a speculative residential property. Other centres are contemplating ventures such as residential houses, senior citizen accommodation, a shopping centre and a variety of business enterprises (e.g. in Rosedale and Bassano).

opinions expressed. Many individuals who have bought shares and are actively promoting the LDC's view this aspect of the Project as a practical method whereby they can invest in their communities' future. They believe that in the speculative house or some similar endeavour they will demonstrate a very visible example of community self-help.

assessment. Because so many of the LDC's are presently in the share-selling stage it is impossible to properly evaluate their potential. (see Appendix '- Bassano Times, May 9, 1973). However, it must be realized that for many of these small communities the attraction of a new family to decent accommodation or the opening of a one or two-man business is a substantial accomplishment. The LDC's may very well represent a practical method to gradually upgrade facilities and services, but they will continue to require assistance from qualified staff in provincial offices. Indeed, it is important that the Province give every encouragement to the LDC's. An unnecessary rebuff when approaches for assistance are made to government agencies may have a most unfortunate impact upon these infant cooperatives.

5) Integrated Planning

In the Project proposal, the fifth objective is described as follows:-

> The concept of the regional package would also require additional planning inputs on the part of the Calgary Regional Planning Commission. The Co-ordinator would work towards adaptions in the present structure of the Calgary Regional Planning Commission to accommodate the inputs of the local structures described in this proposal.

activities. A three-point proposal has been submitted to the Calgary Regional Planning Commission which requested assistance on

a) definition of the limits of the sub-region;
b) an economic base study; and
c) a comprehensive development plan.

To date no further actions have been taken in this respect.

opinions expressed. The communities in the Project do not seem to be wholly satisfied with the work of the Calgary Regional Planning Commission as it has applied to their area. Without discussing specifics many individuals believe that

they have been left in a planning vacuum. Since at least the time of the Task Committee meetings the prospects of a new planning authority for the Drumheller sub-region has been discussed.

The Planning Commission has responded to criticisms of relative inactivity in the area by stressing a shortage of funds and manpower to meet the requests of the communities.

assessment. The Calgary Regional Planning Commission and the Project must engage more fully in a dialogue which will pinpoint the planning needs of the Project area. Once the needs have been identified the Planning Commission must initiate procedures to assist the communities in the Project area.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The Project has accomplished much during its first few months of operation. It represents a rather different approach to the problems of rural decline and if carefully nurtured by all who support its aims it may provide a model for other rural areas in Alberta and elsewhere.

It is, of course, much too early to assess the long-term impact of the Project upon each of the communities and their inhabitants. But the potential of the Project is seen to go far beyond its present accomplishments. Not only may the Project contribute to stabilizing the populations in some of the communities but it also has the potential of giving people in these centres more confidence in attracting investment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Most of the participating communities have already indicated their desire to contribute financially to the Project for one more year (see Appendix). This commitment is important in two ways. First, it indicates the general support of the councils for the aims of the Project and its progress to date. Secondly, by contributing $300 each--a substantial sum in some instances--the communities are expressing their willingness to contribute to their own self-improvement.

   If the Project is to be continued beyond its first year the Government of Alberta will have to provide financial assistance.

   When asked what term the renewal period should be most individuals suggested one year. However, others have indicated periods of from two to five years.

   One advantage pertaining to a one-year renewal is that councils do not have to commit themselves to funding the Project for two budget years. The government likewise. The disadvantage of renewal for but one more year is that Project activities can only be planned and developed over a short period of time and the Project as a whole gives the impression of being a temporary endeavor.

   It is recommended that the Government of Alberta renew the Project for a minimum period of twelve months, recognizing the progress of the Project to date and the promised financial contributions from a majority of the participating communities during such a renewal. It is also recommended that the Government of Alberta consider renewing the Project for a two-year period, provincial funding for the second year being conditional upon financial support coming from the participating communities at that time.

2. The financial support provided by the Government of Alberta during the first year of Project operations was $19,040.00. The communities contributed $3,300.00. The Project Coordinator has indicated that costs of operation have exceeded original expectations. He has also indicated that a higher salary would be required should the Project be renewed.

The budget of the Project during the first year of operation cannot be considered as excessive. The many financial returns brought to the communities, as well as other indicators of progress, suggest that the Project has represented money well invested.

It is recommended that should the Project be renewed, the Government of Alberta examine the budget submitted by the Project Coordinator with a view to contributing funds in keeping with the progress of the Project and the endeavors of the Project Coordinator.

3. Mr. Hugh Bodmer as Project Coordinator has been largely instrumental in making Regional Resources Project #1 a viable operation--as this report attests.

It is recommended that Mr. Hugh Bodmer continue to be Project Coordinator during any renewal period of the Project.

4. If the relative success of a project depends largely upon the imagination and endeavors of one person, his departure at any time may jeopardize the future of that project. Such could be the case with Regional Resources Project #1. If the present Project Coordinator were to depart on other ventures (including possibly the setting up of new Projects), a suitable candidate would be required to fill the role as Project Coordinator.

We must stress that much responsiblity devolves upon the shoulders of the coordinator and future candidates for the position would have to be carefully selected.

It is recommended that a search be made for an assistant to the Project Coordinator in Regional Resources Project #1, to be employed on a part-time basis. The successful candidate would assist in all aspects of the Project's work with a view to eventually becoming a full-time coordinator in this or another project area.

5. The Project Coordinator can only fully understand and appreciate the people and problems of the communities he serves if he actually lives in their midst. To live in and commute from a large urban centre would be morally wrong and physically strenuous.

It is recommended that in Project #1 and any other projects of a similar nature that may be developed, the Project Coordinator must live in one of the small urban communities which he serves.

6. Much of the success of the Project to date has hinged upon the Project Coordinator's ability to liaise between the people he serves and the public agencies which can be of assistance. In this intermediary role the coordinator's status as a self-employed person has seemingly been of great importance. He is not a civil servant. He thus has much greater freedom of movement and speech, both of which are essential for a job of this nature.

It is recommended that under no circumstances should a civil servant act in the capacity of Project Co-ordinator. Rather the coordinator should be a self-employed person who is hired on a contractual arrangement satisfactory to the agencies funding the Project.

7. Regional Resources Project #1 covers a large area. Considerable physical demands are made upon the co-ordinator and the representatives of communities who must travel to evening meetings and other events. The coordinator has made it known that he would prefer to serve a smaller area and thus be able to spend more time in each community. Such an arrangement would probably end the concern expressed by some representatives that the coordinator spends too little time in each centre.

It is recommended that if a part-time assistant is appointed he become responsible for part of the Project area, but that he be required to keep in constant contact with the Project Coordinator with respect to his activities and the acquisition of new information.

8. The Task Force on Urbanization and the Future has been the Project Coordinator's principal "contact" agency in the provincial government, the Task Force budget also being the source from which provincial funds for the Project were derived. The association between the Project and the Task Force has been seemingly mutually beneficial.

It is recommended that The Task Force on Urbanization

and The Future, and particularly its Director, Mr. Frank Marlyn, continue to be the Project's principal link with the provincial government.

9. Much of the success of the Project derives from it being provided with the freedom "to find its own feet." In short it has not become institutionalized. In time no doubt, if other projects are initiated a certain institutionalization will be required. But projects should not become formally associated with any established government department and thus subject to its institutional constraints.

It is recommended that the organizational structure of this and other projects be kept as free as possible of any formal association with the Government of Alberta other than for the purposes of funding, and that under no circumstances should this or any other project become part of an established government department.

10. Some concerns have been expressed that Municipal Districts and Improvement Districts as well as small urban centres form part of the Project. Occasionally such concern may reflect upon an individual perception of the extent to which the population of the rual hinterland is supporting the businesses of the rural centres. If the aim of the Project is in part to establish cooperation amongst the various centres and councils of the Project area, the presence of Municipal Districts and Improvement Districts in the Project should be welcomed.

It is recommended that membership in the Project be open to all interested communities and councils in the Project area, subject to payment of the standard annual financial contribution and the ability of the Project staff to adequately service the communities wishing to participate.

11. Much of the work proposed in the original proposal submitted in 1972 has been accomplished. If the Project is to be renewed goals for the renewal period must be identified.

It is recommended that the Project Coordinator submit a program of goals to the Project Board of Directors and the Government of Alberta and that this program receive the approval of both bodies prior to funding of the Project for another term.

12. Representatives from participating communities may or may not be reimbursed by their respective councils for travel costs associated with meetings of Project Board of Directors. Attendance at such monthly meetings is important for they provide an opportunity for the problems and activities of all participating communities to be discussed.

It is recommended that as part of its budget for a new term of operations the Project designate a sum of money to be used to defray travel costs of representatives attending meetings of the Project Board of Directors.

13. Much of the early work of the Project has been to assist communities on an individual basis. If the participatory aspects of the Project are to be more fully realized, the communities must place greater emphasis upon their region as a whole. The recreational potential of the area is a case in point.

It is recommended that the Project consider as part of its future program a number of objectives which will require the participation of all the communities. It is suggested that the development of the recreational resources of the Project area is one such objective.

14. What prospects exist for the establishment of new project regions? The advantages enjoyed by the present Project because of its association with the Task Committe have been noted. The relative progress enjoyed by the Project to date might not be experienced in other areas during the same time period. Nevertheless it is thought that the concept of the Regional Resources Project has proved sufficiently workable that attention be directed to other areas with the potential for a similar endeavor.

It is recommended that the Government of Alberta request Mr. Frank Marlyn and Mr. Hugh Bodmer and other persons as required to undertake steps to identify additional areas in the Province of Alberta where Regional Resources Projects might be initiated in the future. A tentative starting date and program should follow identification of the areas.

footnotes

1. Task Force on Urbanization and the Future, 1972. Task Committee Reports, p. 43-53

2. In its 1971 election platform the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party stated the following as being challenges to be met in small centres:-

   - to recognize the special quality of life that occurs in the smaller centres
   - to develop programs which give the people of smaller centres an opportunity to fulfill their potential
   - to support the communities which are prepared to take the initiative to help themselves

The present Government of Alberta has instigated a number of measures intended to meet these challenges.

APPENDIX

- Letters from Participating Communities

- Article in Bassano Times, May 9, 1973

VILLAGE OF CARBON

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

CARBON, ALBERTA

Carbon, Alberta
June 5, 1973

Dr. Robert C. Scace
Robert C. Scace & Associates
P.O. Box 7156
Postal Station E
CALGARY, Alberta

Re: Regional Resources Project No. 1

Dear Sir:

Further to our conversation of Friday May 25th, I am happy to confirm that the Village of Carbon council has unaminously agreed that they would be happy to participate in this project should it be granted an extention.

Our Village has felt that we have received many direct benefits from being a part of this project and also because of having the opportunity of having the office of Hugh Bromer in our Village has also been a great deal of strenght to this community. We would be happy to support the project further and look forward to our continued sucess.

Yours Very Truly,

N. Wayne Ohlhauser
Secretary-treasurer

WNO/sak

PROGRESS REPORT REGIONAL RESOURCES PROJECT # 1

I have been involved in the Regional Resources Project # 1 since its early beginning as the Task Force on Urbanization and the Future of Small Towns. My participation has been absolutely voluntary, non-political, and with no intent for personal or individual community lobby or benefit. From my earliest observations it was quite clear that if rural towns and villages such as my own were to survive, some better means of communication between these communities and government, both Provincially and Federally, must be found. We must avail ourselves of the tools and the know-how to help ourselves. The voice of rural Alberta was rapidly being silenced through representation by population and some other means had to be devised to keep the necessary communication channels open and to lobby with the larger urban centres for government attention.

The expense and time required for each town or village to act individually is unrealistic, unattainable, and would prove extremely ineffective. The Task Force on Urbanization and the Future, and later, the Regional Resources Project # 1 seemed to provide the vehicle and a possible solution to the concerns and problems of a decreasing population and thus a dwindling or declining representation by population by combining and coordinating the resources of eleven communities for the mutual benefit of all.

I am not sure that I can adequately appraise the benefit of the Regional Resources Project # 1 to the Hussar Community. Part of this doubt may be accredited to the fact that I have had insufficient time and opportunity to gain full enough communication between the community and myself to keep it informed of what has been happening, or to get its reaction to what has transpired and what benefit has been achieved. I don't think any of us should have expected some startling or earth-shaking development to take place in the matter of a year or two. If we have received the interest, consideration and concern of government our time has been well spent. I must say that it has been a rewarding, enlightening and encouraging experience to participate in the deliberations of eleven communities who have tried to cooperatively formulate a plan and approach that would realize a mutual benefit and improvement for the whole region. I have learned a great deal and have tried to apply what I have learned for the overall betterment of my community as part of the region. I think the significant point I would like to make is, the amount of input regarding concerns of my community I have contributed, along with similar inputs of the other respective communities, that has helped us to identify our problems and has enabled the Project as a whole to formulate a planned program and approach to their solution that, if achieved, will be of benefit to all.

I do not feel that the present deadline for the Regional Resources Project # 1 is sufficient time to complete and conclude all the concerns and deliberations that have been brought to light and are before it at the present time. It has not been able, in the time allotted, to settle down to the real and basic concerns of the communities involved. With this thought in mind, I have approached the Council of the Village of Hussar, and have received its whole-hearted support and approval, with a request to continue with the Resources Project for an extended period of time, hopefully longer than one year.

Respectfully submitted

W Don Taylor

Hussar Representative

REFER TO FILE NO.

I.D. 7

GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

ADDRESS REPLY
THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS
EDMONTON ALBERTA

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS BUILDING
10363 - 108 STREET
EDMONTON, ALBERTA

June 7, 1973

Mr. P. Peace,
Box 7154,
Postal Station "E",
CALGARY, Alberta.
T3C 3N1

Dear Sir:

Re: Regional Resources Project

Please be advised that Improvement District No. 7 will contribute the sum of Three Hundred ($300.00) toward the operation of the above described.

It is asked that you submit an account for processing.

Yours truly,

A. R. ISBISTER,
DIRECTOR OF FIELD SERVICE.

ARI/kl

Town Of Trochu

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY - TREASURER

Trochu, Alberta

June 5, 1973.

Mr. Bob Scace,
P.O. Box 7186,
Postal Station E,
Calgary, Alberta.
T3C 3L1

Dear Sir:

The Town of Trochu would like to go on record as saying that the Regional Resources Project # 1 should be continued.

We have learned that in order to be a thriving community we must work hard ourselves, however we also need the support this Project has given us.

Through this project we became much more aware of the Government assistance available, we know where to ask for it and also know how to apply for it.

Mr. Bodmer is doing a fine job in this area and we would strongly urge that the Government of Alberta would continue to aid this project as we feel it is desperately needed by the smaller centres which our Government believes should be kept alive.

Please give this matter your urgent consideration.

Yours truly,

Allan Gehring

Allan Gehring,
Councillor,
Town of Trochu.

Village of Standard

Office of Secretary-Treasurer

Standard, Alberta

June 5, 1973

Mr. Bob Scace,
Box 7156, Postal Station E,
Calgary, Alberta.
TC3 3M1

Dear Mr. Scace:

Please accept this letter as notification that the Village of Standard are willing to support the Regional Resources Project #1 Program for the next twelve months.

Council of the Village of Standard approved financial participation to the same extent as in 1972 which was in the amount of $300.00.

We trust the foregoing is the required information.

Yours truly,

Paul F. Gates

Paul F. Gates,
Secretary-Treasurer.

PFG/mg

cc: Mayor G.F. Kroon

VILLAGE OF ACME

* * *

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

ACME, ALTA.

Acme Alberta
May 17, 1973

To Whom it May Concern;

Re: Regional Resource Project # 1

At last Regular Council Meeting the Council was approached as to their views in regards to the Regional Resources Project # 1, for the past term.

Council feel as of yet one has been unable to see any great benefits in the Project, however given time, it may prove of some value.

A couple of projects are underway, like the Speculative housing and Unit Housing for Senior Citizens. Of course these both take a great deal of time before the actual projects show any visual progress.

Council highly commend our Representative, Mr.C.S.Smith, who has contributed a great deal of time and effort working along with Mr.Bodmer in the Project.

On behalf of the Council of the Village of Acme

Yours truly

E Hunter

E Hunter
Sec-Treas

D. V. ELDER, SECRETARY-TREASURER

TELEPHONE 44

VILLAGE OF ROCKYFORD
P.O. BOX 160
ROCKYFORD, ALBERTA

May 25,1973

Mr. Bob Scace
Box 7136
Station E,
Calgary, Alberta

Re- Reginal Resources Project #1

Dear Sir;

We, the Council of the Village of Rockyford wish to express our feelings on the above project. We feel that this project has great potential for the community and quite a numember of benefits hope to be realized from this.

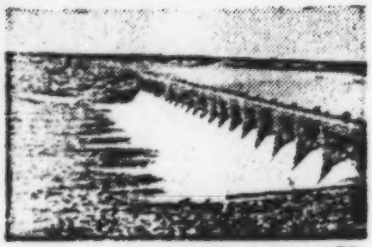
The consenses is that his project should be continued for another eighteen months at least, as most of the groundwork has now been completed and it would seem to be a waste of time, effort and money to discontinue it at this time.

The Village is again willing to support this project financilly in order to have it continue.

Yours truly

D. Elder
Sec-Treas.

W.C. Rieger
Mayor



"BEST IN THE WEST BY A DAM SITE"

TOWN OF BASSANO

Office of the Secretary-Treasurer

Phone 472-3788 BASSANO, ALBERTA P.O. Box 299

toj obo

May 29th, 1973.

Mr. Hugh Bodmer,
Regional Resources Project #1,
Carbon, Alberta.

Dear Hugh:

At their meeting last night, the Council passed a resolution in favour of continuing support of the Regional Resources Project #1 for another year.

Yours very truly,

Municipal Secretary

r

Is Bassano Worth Ten Dollars To You?

(Contributed)

In the next few weeks, representatives from the Bassano & District Local Development Co-Operative will be approaching members of our community with this question. They will be asking you to purchase one or more $10 shares in the BDLDC.

Perhaps you feel that you cannot afford to invest in this venture. Consider the possibilities. No community stands still! If we do not expand and develop, we will deteriorate.

Ask yourself: "Do I need Bassano?" Perhaps you are Completely self sufficient. Your livelihood does not directly depend on the town — you are self employed. Your source of income will go on whether the town is here or not!

But what about the other services the town offers?

Do you use the hospital, your family depend on our local doctors? Unless our community remains viable and alive, with our hospital used to its full capacity, how long can we depend on government support of the hospital?

Do your children attend school here? With the ever increasing threat of centralization and with school enrollment decreasing, unless our community continues to grow, the very existence of our local school is threatened!

Do you attend church in Bassano? Perhaps you don't go regularly, but you need the local churches regardless. Would you like to arrange a wedding for your daughter in a larger neighboring community or city; or bury a loved one in a place other than your hometown? How long could our churches exist and support their clergy if our population were to dwindle?

Do your sons play hockey at the arena, or your children swim at the pool? Do you curl in the winter? All these facilities are expensive and depend on a growing community to exist and expand.

Do you shop in town? Perhaps the selection and variety are not as good as you would like. If the population remains stagnant or declines, they too will become more limited. The converse is also true. The larger and more viable our community becomes, so will the variety and services available.

So what is the relationship of all this to the BDLDC, and your investment?

There are local people willing and qualified to establish commercial enterprises in Bassano. Young people with trades, people wanting to open new businesses, people with ideas for small industrial enterprises, but money is a problem.

The Alberta Opportunity Fund will lend up to 80% on a sound business venture, the Federal Industrial Development Bank will lend money and so will the Small Business Loans Branch. But what good is even 80% if you don't have the other 10 percent or 20 percent?

This is where we can help. By buying shares in the BDLDC we can establish a continuing source of funding for such ventures. The BDLDC is registered with the government, with all the legal safeguards and auditing procedures to protect your investment.

If these ventures prove successful, you will receive dvidends on your shares. However, as in any speculative venture, there are no ironclad guarantees.

But how can you lose? Unless Bassano continues to gow and expand, we all stand to lose much more than $.0.00.

It appears that outside business interests have faith i the future of Bassano. The new bank building is surey a good indication. Banks over the years have the nputation for making sound investments.

With the ever increasing demand for world food supply, ur area is destined for greater development. Let us all be part of it.

Initial shares may be purchased from your canvasser o by contacting Mr. Lloyd Brown or Mrs. M. Hislop.